VERSES

By
FRANK H. CRAIC

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WAITS RIVER, VT.

1928



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INDEX

Autumn	29
A Faded Flower	15
Boyhood Memories	27
Childhood Memories	60
Come April Breezes	57
Christmas Night	61
Daybreak on the Farm	24
December 28, 1924	32
Fall	22
Hepatica	34
In June	8
Illinois	63
In Winter	52
Iowa	64
John Horse	45
Laddie Boy	38
March	58
Memories	23
My Garden	41
My Old Sweetheart	50
More About Corn	12
Mong the Hills	48
Old Chum	39
Old Friends	7
On Woodman Hill	40
Our Maples	47
Our Trees	10
Sabbath Morn	59
School Days	36

Shadows	49
Sing to Me	16
Snowflakes	17
Some Days	33
Tell It With Wood	43
The Blacksmith	14
The Catbird	35
The Chickadee	37
The Farmer	18
The Fog	62
The Great Storm	44
The Home-made Apple Pie	28
The Narcissus	13
The New Star	55
The North Wind	19
The Schoolboy	11
The Songster	26
The Sparrow	31
The Stranger	46
The Thread Girl	53
The Two Stars	30
The Woodchopper	9
The Winter Elves	. 20
Twenty Below	42
Vermont	51
Washington's Birthday	56
When der Win Heds Doun der Riber	54
Winter Beauty	25

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HOME

Though it be in tropic region, Or in Greenland's icy clime, Love for home and fireside Ever stands the test of time.

OLD FRIENDS

Last night I sat in my easy chair And my thoughts went back to you; I dreamed of days of long ago, And of friendships tried and true.

In my dreams I saw the beauty
That nature unfolds in the spring,
I heard in the trees of summer,
The most musical birds that sing.

But neither the song of bird, Nor the beauty that nature sends, Can fill the place in my heart That belongs to my old-time friends.

Years may come, and years may go, Things of the earth may pass away, But courage will, to the end, endure, If only our friends will stay.

IN JUNE

Listen to the mocking-bird,
'Neath a sky so clear and blue,
Harken to the robin's note,
Hear the wood thrush calling too.

Through a grove of leafy trees, Spruce and beech on either side, Flows the noisy winding river Like a thread of silver wide.

The herd boy down the dewy lane,
Drives the browsing cow along,
And his merry whistled tune
Mocks the bird its morning song.

All nature is rejoicing,
This early morning in June,
The herd boy and the songsters,
Are fully with nature in tune.

'Tis ever thus where'er man be, With smiling lips and steady heart, He finds enjoyment everywhere, If plays he well an honest part.

THE WOODCHOPPER

'Tis winter in the forest,
And the dusk that follows day,
Has come to meet the hillsides,
With banks of sober gray.

A night bird's cry is heard, From out the darkened sky, The screech owl calls his mate, 'Mong maples stark and high.

A chopper from his labors
A-down the path is coming,
A song of home and fireside
His bearded lips are humming.

Through fallen snow that covers
The moss-embedded ground,
The chopper's footsteps hurry
With crinkle, crackle sound.

He hears no call of cowbell,
His stock is in the fold,
The light from out his fireplace
Gleams like the purest gold.

His supper hot and steaming Is spread upon the table, No rich man's fare is this, No fashion marks its label.

And humble though it be, This chopper's lowly cot, No nobler habitation With riches can be bought.

For 'tis home and home alone, Whether mansion, tent or cot, That makes a man forever Contented with his lot.

OUR TREES

Had I the tongue of a poet,
I would sing of our beautiful trees,
From the maples of old Vermont
To the redwoods facing the seas.

I would sing of the wondrous beauty Of forested valley and glen, Of the love for forest and flowers Implanted in the hearts of men.

I would sing of birds in the forest, Whose homes are built in the shade, Of those melodious songsters For whom the tree-tops were made.

I would sing of progress and wealth,
That comes from the wood of the tree,
Of what it has done for man
In making a land that is free.

My song would ever encourage
The planting of forest and tree,
For thus is conserved our resources,
The states and the nation agree.

THE SCHOOLBOY

I know a schoolboy
Whose liking for school
No weather at zero
His ardor can cool.

'Tis schooltime, he cries Then hurries away, For comrades at school Are shouting in play.

As eager as any,
This schoolboy of ours,
For skating or shinny,
At all times and hours.

But games he will stay
Till lessons are done,
For 'tis in this way
Life's battles are won.

Good luck to this boy, So eager for school, That nothing whatever His ardor can cool.

MORE ABOUT CORN

"I like corn bread and butter,"
Said little Johnny Zink,
"As long as I can have it
I'll be a happy gink.

One other thing I like," said he,
"And that is corn and milk;
I'd rather have a bowlful
Than wear a coat of silk.

I like corn pudding, too," said he,
"That's cooked above a fire.
Who says it's good for nothing
Such is a tarnal liar.

It's me," said he, "can eat
A whole big Johnny-cake,"
And not a single grumble
Will little Johnny make.

This Johnny, in the winter, With all his cribbing done, Began to think of Sally Jones, 'Twas her he'd almost won.

From out his ears of corn,
He chose the reddest one,
Then hied himself to Jones's
And there the job was done.

And now this Johnny Zink, Who raises corn to eat, Has one to cook his corn, That never can be beat.

THE NARCISSUS

Beautiful child of the star-land,
Deep in the mould you thrive,
Taking from earth and from air,
The strength which keeps you alive.

Up from your bosom in May-time, Springs a blossom of purest white, Which gives to the world a beauty, That hallows both day and night.

To your crown of crimson and gold, Which resembles the Holy Grail, Troop in numbers the insect world, From forest, from hill and dale.

They take their fill of the nectar,
From your cup of purest gold,
And leave for the children of men
A wealth of fragrance untold.

THE BLACKSMITH

The village smithy stands
In a hollow 'mong the hills;
Sturdy is its roof-tree,
And staunch its wooden sills.

Wide open stands its door, Where enters one and all; No rival has the blacksmith 'Mong those who on him call.

He shoes the ox or horse,
Then mends a wagon wheel,
An auto stands a-waiting
Its gas pipe to anneal.

All day the blacksmith works, With sooty hands and face, To him, this man of labor, The grime has no disgrace.

And when the day is done, And the air is growing chill, He takes the forest pathway To his home upon the hill.

And humble though it be, This toiler's hillside cot, A happy home has he, Contentment is his lot.

A FADED FLOWER

Only a faded flower
Lying between two leaves,
Souvenir from a little friend
For whom my heart still grieves.

A dainty creature she, With heart so light and free, More like a graceful fawn She tripped along with me.

Down the lane we wandered, Myself once more a child, Mild the June-day breezes, And sweet the roses wild.

I hear her gentle prattle,
"Why are the roses red,
And where do little girls go
When snugly tucked in bed?"

Her nimble fingers plucked One rose beneath a tree; With cheeks that rivaled roses, She handed it to me.

Long years has she been gone, But still her hand I feel, And the odor of that rose Still to my senses steal.

SING TO ME

Sing to me a song of cheer, On these cold December days, When the snow lies on the ground, Under clouds and slanting rays.

Sing of days in Bethlehem, And of one who therein lay 'Mong the cattle in a manger, On that olden Christmas day.

Sing of her, that mother, too, Gentle as a brooding dove, On whose face there shone, All that marks a holy love.

Sing of brave men, tried and true, Lying under fields of snow, Of those others over there, Where the fields of poppies grow.

Sing to me of deeds of kindness, That are done throughout the year; Let the bells ring out the story So that all the world may hear.

Sing to me of loving friendships, And of handclasps firm and strong; May we reap in fullest measure From the merry Christmas song.

SNOWFLAKES

All day long since early morning,
The silent flakes of snow,
Have dropt from out a leaden sky,
A steady ceaseless flow.

They build the snowdrift higher,
That lies along the ground,
They cover deep the old stone walls,
Till not a one is found.

No wind from out the east or west, To move a branch of tree; Heaped high the snow on ev'ry bush As far as eye can see.

They mix the green with white, In pine tree and the spruce; Such splendid starry crystals No other climes produce.

They cover path, they cover road, Till every trace is lost; They little care nor little heed The wealth they will exhaust.

Yet the beauty and the pastimes
That the snowflakes ever bring,
Give to us the greatest pleasure
Till the coming of the spring.

THE FARMER

Before the open grate he sits, And watches the embers glow; Outside the winds of winter Drift high the frozen snow.

Content is he, this farmer,
For done is the work today,
His family at his fireside,
His children at their play.

His cattle snugly sheltered,
The season's work is done,
His toil throughout the summer
A competence has won.

Heaped high the lean-to shed With knot, with stick and splinter, Whose captive heat and ruddy glow Defy the blasts of winter.

He craves those pleasures not That city-wise are sent, For his family and his farm Make up his heart's content.

THE NORTH WIND

I am the wind of winter,
I come from the land of snows,
I've seen the mighty iceberg,
I've heard the grinding floes.

Beyond the Arctic circle
I saw the Polar bear,
The silver fox I followed
To the shelter of his lair.

On Greenland's icy plain
I saw the sturdy deer,
I heard the howling wolf-pack,
That fills the night with fear.

I saw the flash of snowbird Darting across the sky, Along the rocky coast-line I heard the fulmar's cry.

I bring to plain and valley
The cold of zero weather,
I bind with icy fetters
A-many streams together.

I am the storm-king's minion; For nearly half the year I sting, I whip, I bluster, Till summer days appear.

THE WINTER ELVES

The gold of the leaves,
The blue of the sky,
The honk of the geese
As southward they fly,

Tell us that autumn,
With its wealth untold,
Is with us again
As in days of old.

With trace of frost-work
It proclaims its sway,
And sends the winter elves
A-riding this way.

Elf-folk that delight
In tweaking the nose,
And everything else
Including the toes.

In fancy we see them
Come trooping along,
Old elf and young elf,
With dance and with song.

They dance at midnight
In the forest glade,
Beside the burrow
That the rabbit made.

They loop the fireflies
With streamers of gold,
And drive them tandem
With raptures untold.

'Tis fun for the elves
Throughout the long night,
Till the rising sun
Provokes them to flight.

Then tired and sleepy
And cross are the elves,
Who hunt some dark place
Where they hide themselves.

For only at night
Can these elves be seen,
When the moon floods all
With its silvery sheen.

FALL

There's a tide in the life of man, When the work of the season is done, When the rewards for trials and toil Have been gathered, one by one.

His strength and his youth are gone, They, like the leaves in the fall, Have loosed their hold on the twig, No more will they strive at all.

But man, like the leaves of the forest, Has gathered the season's gold, By his deeds of kindness to others, He is richer a hundred fold.

He has learned, as all must learn,
As we near the parting of ways,
That this helping one another
Is the only thing that pays.

We need not fear the future then,
While watching our leaves to fall,
For we know that a loving hand
Cares for the leaves and for all.

MEMORIES

From a corner of my garret
Comes a book that's badly worn,
Fifty years the dust has gathered
On its pages creased and torn.

As I turn its musty pages
In electric's magic glow,
Comes a picture faintly stealing
Of those days of long ago.

When upon the old school desk
Lay this book with covers blue,
And my days were spent in conning
Word by word its lessons through.

Well remembered days were those, Bright the meadow flowers grew, Whirred the wings of ruffled grouse, High in air the wild geese flew.

Sweat of brow and daily toil Clarified the brain of man, Filled his heart to overflowing As no modern pleasure can.

Then, the children gathered nightly Round the fireside one by one, Pleasant was the home to them When their daily tasks were done.

DAYBREAK ON THE FARM

'Tis daybreak on the farm, And from the stairway door Comes, "Time to get up, boys, It's four o'clock or more."

Down the stairs we hurry, Rubbing our sleepy eyes, Kick on our boots of leather, With many gusty sighs.

One to the barnyard hurries, To milk the waiting kine, Another to the corncrib, To feed the noisy swine.

The horses, wide awake, Are stamping in their stalls, For early morning rations Each whinny loudly calls.

Good measure quickly given, Of corn, of oats and hay; In summer on the farm, There is no time for play.

Each collar freed from dirt, Each harness buckled on, The brimming pails of milk Have to the cellar gone.

The chores are done at last, The "breakfast" call is heard, To hungry girls and boys, Most welcome is the word.

Those days have passed for us, No more they cause alarm, For early calls are banned On our rocky hillside farm.

WINTER BEAUTY

I love the wondrous beauty
Of these eastern hills at night,
When the snow upon the ground,
Sparkles with a spectral light.

When the watchful partridge And the frisky squirrel red, Snug and deeply buried lie, In a warm but wintry bed.

When the birch tree and the maple,
Darkened branches clearly show,
And the spruce tree and the pine
Downward bend beneath the snow.

When the sky o'er wooded slopes, Seldom shows a cloud in sight, And the stars above are hidden By the greater orb of night.

When the runner of the sled
Crunches through the icy snow,
And the fingers sting and tingle,
With old Winter's fiery glow.

* * * * *

Do you know that many people Would enjoy the wondrous sight Of these snow-clad hillsides On an Eastern winter night?

THE SONGSTER

A jolly brown thrush, High up in a tree, Is singing a song That is music for me.

Happy roister is he, This song bird of mine, Who wakes with the sun On these mornings so fine.

Swinging high on a branch Of the old apple tree, He breaks forth in song, For he's happy and free.

The cherries are gone,
But the berries I fear,
Will tempt his bright eyes,
In my garden so near.

But why should I care, if
With my fruit he makes free,
While he pays with the songs
That are music to me.

BOYHOOD MEMORIES

My mind reverts to the farm,
Where I lived when I was a boy,
When the days were ever pleasant,
And my heart was full of joy.

Up with the lark in the morning, At work in the dewy air; Well I remember those days, Was there ever a world so fair?

Then was a time for visions,
For the future was all before,
My mind like the golden eagle
In the blue of the sky would soar.

Life passes but slowly in youth,
Whether of city or farm,
And those boyish dreams of mine
Lost something of glow and charm.

But the pleasure of field and farm, Still lingers, an after-glow Of the joys of my early boyhood In those days of long ago.

THE HOME-MADE APPLE PIE

Boyhood days have passed away, Like clouds across the sky, Yet still can we remember The home-made apple pie.

Scalloped at the edges,
The crusts were ever thin,
One above and one below,
Chuck-full of fruit within.

A pinch of spicy nutmeg, A white and flaky crust, A pie that any boy could eat, And one that he could trust.

No quarter, no, nor any half, Was then enough for me, Why pies were ever cut at all Was more than I could see.

Though there are other pies,
With ratings very high,
The one that suits me best,
Is the home-made apple pie.

AUTUMN

The leaves are changing their colors, The season is passing along, In forest, in meadow and stubble, The cricket is singing his song.

The birds of wood and of field,
Are bidding the north goodby,
They know as well as we do
That soon the snows will fly.

The farmer has gathered his corn,
His wood is piled for the year,
Potatoes are boxed in the cellar,
The leaves in the meadow are sere.

The summer has passed so quickly We know not whence it has gone, 'Tis ever thus for the worker, That the seasons hurry on.

But man is surely rewarded,
When the work of the year is done,
If his toil throughout the summer
A harvest of plenty has won.

THE TWO STARS

In the eastern sky,
A star shines bright,
As shone that star
On Christmas night,

When the shepherds watched From the barren hills, Near Bethlehem, 'Mid rocks and rills.

That star looked down On a lowly bed, In a stable old, Where the oxen fed.

Under that star, On a Christmas night, Was born the Prince Of truth and right.

Our star looks down On a troubled world, Where greed is written On the flag unfurled.

But the saving grace,
From that Christmas night,
Will triumph at last
For truth and for right.

THE SPARROW

Little brown birdie,
They say that you're bad;
I wonder if they know
What a time you've had.

Would man in your place, All hands against him, Act better than you do, Be any the less grim?

In summer you're hot,
And in winter you're cold.
Why surprised should we be
That you're naughty and bold?

They say that you harm
Other birds on the nest.
Are they sure you are worse
Than are some of the rest?

That you turn things awry,
We all know to be true,
But think of the good things
That can be said about you.

You cling to your friends, And you stand up for self. Is that so unnatural? Be it man, bird or elf.

And do not the hands
That care for us all,
Take heed of the least
Of you sparrows that fall?

DECEMBER 28, 1924

Not a twig of tree is stirring, Straight the snowflakes gently fall From a sky of leaden color, Through the tree-tops grim and tall.

Giving to each hill and valley
Warmest coat of purest white,
That will cover wood-folk children
With a darkness like the night.

Shut in darkness is the woodchuck, So is squirrel in his den, E'en the snow-protected partridge Has no fear of storm-tied men.

Nature's buds and nature's flowers, In the flinty earth below, Are protected and are nourished By these wintry flakes of snow.

Beauty giving flakes are they, Gently settling as a dove, To mankind they symbolize Purity and Nature's love.

SOME DAYS

Some days are dark and stormy, No ray of light breaks through, But could we see beyond the clouds We'd find the skies still blue.

We'd find above those storm-clouds low A sun that's brightly shining, And that the darkest cloud of all Still has a silver lining.

Thus 'tis at times in lives of men, As at their tasks they go, That life seems dark and dreary As storm-clouds hanging low.

But faith in the heart of man Brightens the day's declining, As the sun in the sky above Silvers the storm-cloud's lining.

HEPATICA

Blue as the skies above,
It catches the searcher's eye,
As it clings to the rocky bluff
Above where the snow-banks lie.

From a mass of mottled leaves
As warm as a squirrel's nest,
This early flower of spring
Triumphant leads the rest.

First is it of flowers gay
To lure the drowsy bees,
And first to shed a fragrance
Among the barren trees.

Other flowers are pleasing
In spring, in summer and fall,
But for the lover of nature
Hepatica rivals them all.

THE CATBIRD

The cathird calls
From out the tree,
His home is close,
He's watching me.

Hidden somewhere, A grass-lined nest, His mate is there, He does the rest.

He brings the worm, He scolds the dog, While she sits still Just like a log.

But in that nest,
If one could see,
Some birdies are,
One, two and three.

What is it for,
This catbird's nest,
These daily tasks,
And all the rest?

A hidden page
To you and me,
Whose blinded eyes
May sometime see.

SCHOOL-DAYS

(To the class of 1925)

Happy schooldays at Neponset,
Fast those days have slipped away,
But the lessons that you've learned,
Will with you forever stay.

Fundamentals there were taught,
By your teachers day by day;
Truth and right have been their aims;
From their teachings never stray.

Friendships made in class and schoolroom, Thoughts of tasks you've overcome, Ought to fill your hearts with gladness, Through the many years to come.

Back you'll look from man's estate, To this work you now complete; Then the thoughts that come to you Will be filled with incense sweet.

Happy days these days of youth, When the world is all before, When the wealth of all the ages, Lies before you to explore.

THE CHICKADEE

There's a snow-flecked birdie, That comes down to my door, Singing chick-a-dee, dee, 'Tis his song o'er and o'er.

He picks up the crumbs
That I scatter for him,
Or drinks from the basin
That is full to the brim.

He may hold a big crumb
With his little black feet,
While he picks off a mouthful,
Which he hurries to eat.

Or again he may take
A big piece in his bill,
Then fly away quickly
To a tree on the hill.

I love this wee birdie,
And his songs manifold
Pay for all that he eats
While the weather is cold.

LADDIE BOY

A little lad, a lad of five, With toes so bare and brown, Is standing by the fireside Arrayed in spotless gown.

This laddie boy so small
Is ready for his bed,
There, soon the downy pillow
Will rest his tired head.

But laddie boy is lonely,
For his mother's far away,
No more her arms enfold him,
No more she hears him pray.

Yet sometimes laddie thinks
That mother's voice he hears,
And in his dreams at night
Her loving face appears.

Dear lonesome little lad,
His mother's arms he misses,
But most of all he longs for
That mother's bedtime kisses.

OLD CHUM

Old chum, do you remember, When you and I were boys, How closely interwoven Our actions, thoughts and joys?

Our homes were close together,
A path across the way;
The friendship there begun
Has never passed away.

We found the reddest cherries,
We snitched some apples, too,
We mounted high the robin tree,
To find its eggs of blue.

We trod a country roadside
Upon our way to school,
We waded deep in summer
In muddy brook and pool.

You do remember, surely, That schoolroom's dusty floor, The rush we made at noontime Throughout its battered door.

Nor have you yet forgotten,
Though it may cause you gloom,
How often we were standing
In some corner of that room.

The neighbors said, "We two Were birds alike in feather," And well we filled the saying, For we surely flocked together.

Those times have passed away,
We've grown much more sedate,
But time can never fully
Those days obliterate.

ON WOODMAN HILL

A winsome lass, a lass of ten, With cheeks of healthy brown, Is out with sled on Woodman hill, Above the river town.

She coasts a-down the winding road, Through frost and winter air, Two braids stream out behind her, Of silky golden hair.

She skims the ice-bound road-bed, Like birds upon the wing, The hiss-like crunching runners Throughout the stillness ring.

Before the ancient bridge is reached, Where swift the river flows, Her cheeks of brown have taken on The colors of the rose.

O, winsome lass on Woodman hill, These days of youth will pass, The youthful pleasures of to-day, No others can surpass.

MY GARDEN

I like to plant a garden, No matter where it be, To care for it, to water it, Is much of fun for me.

To see a baby seedling
Put forth a tiny sprout
Fills me with a rapture
That truly is devout.

I love to see my garden
A-sparkle in the dew,
Bright jewels of the sun,
That morn by morn renew.

I like to see my garden
Grow up from tiny seeds,
To shelter it, to water it,
To pull the noisome weeds.

And when that garden ripens, With fruit of every kind, I am as proud an owner As one can ever find.

TWENTY BELOW

There's frost upon the window,
There's frost in the morning air,
It tingles toes and fingers,
While coming down the stair.

Be-decked are kitchen windows With silver ferns and leaves, Above them hang the icicles, Stalagmites from the eaves.

Outside the waning moonlight Reflects from frozen snow A million sparkling diamonds, That brightly come and go.

The river in its channel
Is held with bands of ice,
Its noisy running waters
No more the birds entice.

The squirrel and the partridge Are buried in the snow; 'Tis nature's wise provision For her children here below.

A tinge of red across the sky
Proclaims the coming day;
'Twill turn the silver into gold,
And drive the frost away.

TELL IT WITH WOOD

From the eastern main
To the western seas,
"Tell it with wood
From our forest trees."

Aye, tell it with wood,
The strongest and best
That money can buy
In the east or the west.

Preserve and conserve The wood-clad hills, Their shaded nooks, Their silvery rills.

For forest and hill
Were a gift to man,
A wonderful gift
In a wonderful plan.

THE GREAT STORM

(November 3, 1927)

November clouds hang low, No sign of eastern sun, For thirty hours and more The storm its race has run.

The hillside brook becomes A river in the night, Its foaming cataracts A wondrous pretty sight.

No bank can hold the river, Man's tiny force it mocks, It sweeps with thunder noise, One rock 'gainst other rocks.

It cuts new water channels,
And batters down the bridges,
It takes its own detritus
And heaps it into ridges.

Two-faced the storm-king is, He may be good or bad, But we prefer him always When good, not when he's mad.

JOHN HORSE

John horse was once a colt, That spent its time in play, Or fed on hillside meadows, Throughout the summer day.

John feared no cold in winter, His master was his joy, John followed him about, This life he did enjoy.

The youth, John's loving master, Grew up to man's estate; The coltish Johnny horse Took on some added weight.

For them no more the days Were spent in idle play; Such days for both of them Forever passed away.

The youth became a doctor,
A doctor kind and true;
Many were the snowdrifts
That Johnny took him through.

Long years of service done, While seasons passed away, Long days of steady work, While both were turning gray.

The people loved the doctor,
This doctor tried and true,
But let us not forget
That Johnny loved him too.

THE STRANGER

A stranger, old and weary, Is slowly making his way Through darkness and the storm, At the close of a winter day.

Torn and old is his clothing,
His hair is wet with the snow,
Lost and alone in the valley,
He knows of no place to go.

Through the gently falling snow,
The light of a candle shines
From a cabin on the hillside,
Below the snow-covered pines.

He follows the candle's gleam
And feebly knocks at the door;
Shelter and food he humbly craves,
Then drops to the log-hewn floor.

Kind hands minister quickly
To the needs of this aged one,
They care for him as gently
As they would for an erring son.

When morning came to the cabin,
And the sun through the window shone,
Surprise came to the cottagers,
And a delight before unknown.

For on the stand by the bedside, Where had lain the stranger frail, There stood in all its splendor That holy of cups, the Grail.

OUR MAPLES

In the spring when life is waking, Under drifts of wintry snow, Then our grand old maples waken, And their sap begins to flow.

'Mong the pine trees of the forest, Where is heard the partridge call, Flaunt these trees a wondrous beauty, From late summer through the fall.

Deep their roots have taken hold Of the moss-covered stony ledge, And they stand with spreading arms E'en beyond its flint-like edge.

Themes are they for pen and artist, In October's rosy glow, When the hills are brightly decked As no other lands can know.

Stand they firm in winter season, Like the watchman on the Rhine; To Vermont they represent Greater wealth than flock or mine.

Woodman, spare our sugar maples, Let them stand on hillside slope, For these trees so strong and hardy Give to farming greater scope.

'MONG THE HILLS

Not soon shall I forget
This climb among the hills,
The azure skies above me,
The nearer sound of rills.

There comes upon the air
The song of warbling bird,
It echoes 'mong the hills,
None sweeter ever heard.

That snow-clad line afar,
The distant ranges mark,
The trees upon their slopes
Are densely massed and dark.

Below me lies a valley,
And there a winding stream,
It sparkles in the sunlight
With many a dancing gleam.

There's beauty in the valley
With its cattle and its crops,
But the beauty of the hills
Is seen from on their tops.

SHADOWS

When evening comes and the night Shuts out the light of day, One by one the stars come out To drive the gloom away.

E'en when the clouds hang lowest, With darkness like the night, Somewhere above these clouds The sun is shining bright.

A storm may sometimes mar A lovely rose's bloom, Yet still that rose may shed A wondrous sweet perfume.

Sometimes troubles come to man, That cause him much dismay Till friendly hands reach out To help him on his way.

For ev'ry cloud that darkens
There is a gleam of light,
For ev'ry day that saddens
There are others that requite.

MY OLD SWEETHEART

A bonnie, bonnie lassie
Was that sweetheart old of mine,
Who won my heart and kept it
In the days of auld lang syne.

Her eyes were like the stars,
And her form of fairy mold,
The hair that hid her smiling face
Shone like the purest gold.

She smiled for me alone
In those days of long ago,
My heart still holds her sacred,
No others care I to know.

The years have passed away,
There is silver among the gold,
But the love for my old sweetheart
Has never, never grown cold.

Down the pathway of life
We've wandered to and fro,
But still she smiles for me
As in the days of long ago.

No fears had I at all
Of future storm nor tide,
For that sweetheart old of mine,
Was standing by my side.

And when I cross the sunset bar,
Pushing outward towards the sea,
May she, that loved companion,
Go hand in hand with me.

VERMONT

Beautiful land of sunshine, Land of rocks and of hills, Where leap the laughing waters Of a thousand noisy rills.

Where birds, in early springtime, Make merry in every tree, And flowers bloom uncounted On hillside pastures and lea.

Where meadows in the June-time Blood-red with berries flaunt, The hilltops crowned with maples, The pride of old Vermont.

'Tis ever a land of beauty,
In seasons throughout the year,
A subject for the artist,
A theme for poet and seer.

No humble tongue of mortal Has ever the power to tell One-half the wondrous beauty Of hill, of valley, of dell.

IN WINTER

When the snow is on the ground,
And the hearth-fire blazes red,
There is music in the air,
Though the birds have southward fled.

Merry sleigh-bells and their jingle, Crunching runners through the snow, Make sweet music in the land, When the winds of winter blow.

E'en the blossoms of the southland, And the rose-tree of the west, Lose their glamour in our eyes, When the spruce with snow is drest.

Where such beauty as is seen,
On these mornings crisp and cold,
When the sun in splendor paints
Shades of crimson and of gold.

Were we exiled at this time
To those warmer southern seas,
We should miss the whitened hills,
We should miss the snow-clad trees.

THE THREAD GIRL

At work by the counter, In a space two-by-four, Is the girl who sells thread For the ten-cent store.

With fingers that are nimble, And a step that is light, She waits on her customers From morning till night.

She works with a will,
That is pleasant to see;
Her face, like the May-time,
Is ever care-free.

The tint of good health
Which mantles her cheek
Needs not the color
That the fashionable seek.

For the girl who is busy
In a space two-by-four,
Just look to the thread counter
Of the ten-cent store.

WHEN DER WIN HEDS DOUN DER RIBER

When der win heds doun der riber Dems der times we alus shiber, Shiber lik a tremblin' leaf In der edies roun der reef.

Dems der mornins dat der close Never cover all der toes; Dems der mornins dat der nose Turns der color of der rose,

Und der fingers sting und tingle, Lik our fader's pine-tree shingle; E'en der thot, it maks us shiber When der win heds doun der riber.

Dems der mornins, brit und earli, Our old ruster, big und burli, (Dat old ruster, medlin' cock) Maks more nois dan larrum clock.

Und he waks us from der sleep, Dat vas broad as it vas deep; Darn dat medlin' ruster cock, With his loud old larrum clok.

How we hate to think of it, We do lik it, not one bit, When der win begin to quiber Lik he's hedin' doun der riber.

THE NEW STAR

One winter night, Long, long ago, The shepherds sang With voices low,

While tending sheep On Judah's hills, Compassed about By brooks and rills.

The stars above,
Their guide at night,
They knew them all,
Each satellite.

Their wonder grew,
That winter night,
A brighter star
Hove on their sight.

They saw this star, A blazing gem, It stood above Fair Bethlehem.

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

Eyes of freemen turn today
Towards Mount Vernon's rising sun
Filled are hearts to overflowing,
With a love for Washington.

Washington, our Washington,
Brave and staunchest of the ages,
Just his cause, the justest ever
Told by history in its pages.

Let the nations laud their heroes, Tell of battles they have won, None can ever dim the luster Of our noble Washington.

We inherit both the glory
And the tasks that he begun,
Let us hold them ever sacred,
As we prize our Washington.

COME APRIL BREEZES

Come quickly April breezes,
Bring back the gentle shower,
Draw forth the frosts of winter,
And start the early flower.

Start the sap its upward course, In all our maple trees, Bring forth that sappy sweetness, Which lures the drowsy bees.

Breathe on the rocky hillside, Where sleeps the violet blue, Reach down beneath the snowdrift And nature's buds renew.

Bring back the cawing crow, Release the ice-locked river, Drive back those northern blasts, That ever make us shiver.

Come quickly April breezes, We look for you today. We know by all the omens You're now upon your way.

MARCH

March is a month of changes, Of winds, of rain and of cold; What else could be expected? Old Winter is losing his hold.

He is on his way to the north, Carrying his ice and the snow; 'Tis a joy for us to know it, He surely is going, but slow.

The birds will follow him closely,
They will sing in the trees above,
The sun and the rain together
Will bring the flowers we love.

'Tis easy to keep one's courage
This dreary month of the year,
For April and May are coming,
They are now on the way and near.

SABBATH MORN

The sun rose bright o'er eastern hill, Bathing with light my window sill.

The song of bird in shrub and tree Spoke to me of a life that's free.

Glinted the river through the trees, Moved the leaves in every breeze.

Every dewdrop a diamond bright, Alchemist formed overnight.

One smoke rose above them all, 'Twas the pastor's austere and tall.

First was he, of Scotland born, To break the quiet—this Sabbath morn.

Free from toil and steady grind As any haven that one can find,

Is this village among the hills, Flanked about by brooks and rills.

River and hill and tree adorn This quiet place on Sabbath morn.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Back to the days of childhood
Does memory turn tonight;
We see again the kitchen walls,
And the firelight gleaming bright.

The old clock stands upon the shelf, And near it the spinning wheel Patiently waits for busy hands At the close of the evening meal.

A candle shines from the center Of the table oaken and old; In the corners round about, Lurk shadows grotesque and bold.

The men-folks in from the stable, With chairs tipped back to the wall, Like Rover, tired and hungry, Are waiting the supper call.

Coarse was the food but plenty,
And rude was that humble home,
But who can ever forget it,
Though far from its portals we roam?

No picture of modern times,
However skillful the art,
Can erase the visions of childhood,
So dear to the human heart.

CHRISTMAS NIGHT

While the snows are deep without, And the winds of winter blow, We sit by the old, old fireplace And watch the embers glow.

Heaped high are the coals therein, And the flames dance to and fro, Bright'ning the walls of the room And its wreaths of mistletoe.

Uncle within his easy chair, And I by the table old, Are talking of olden times, Of their pleasures manifold.

We talk of long-lost faces, Of friends made long ago, And through the halls of memory Their voices come and go.

Our hearts are filled with sorrow,
As we think of the loving ties,
That bind us to those dear ones
Who have passed beyond the skies.

Through all the world tonight,
The Christmas bells are ringing,
But sweeter still those loved ones
Are with the angels singing.

THE FOG

A fog-cloud hangs heavy In the valley below, Not a breath of air stirs The leaves to and fro.

Through a rift in the fog
On the side of the hills,
A line of green trees,
An open space fills.

The valley is quiet,
As the leaves on the trees,
Not a whistle is heard,
Not a person one sees.

Not even the murmur Of a brook is heard, Nor song from the trees Of cricket or bird.

For the fog like a pall, Is a damper to life, It shuts from the world Its sunlight and strife.

ILLINOIS

Illinois, your home, my home, With soil that's rich and deep, Where fields of waving grain For miles the prairies sweep.

Her rivers and her lake,
Beneath our flag unfurled,
Carry many useful products
To the markets of the world.

'Tis a gem among the lands, That encircle all the earth, Where of noble deeds and actions There has never been a dearth.

Of this land, our Illinois,
Let us ever then be proud,
Let us ever, ever love it,
Let us sing its praises loud.

For our state or any state
Will be great or will be small,
As they live and think within it,
One by one her people all.

IOWA

Land where gentle breezes blow, Land where streams of silver flow, We love her hills, her waving grain, Her winter's cold, her summer's rain.

From east to west her prairies sweep, O'er stream and lake with trout a-leap, There, grazing flocks on rolling lea. Reach farther than the eye can see.

Across her bosom fathoms deep, Sailing cloud-shadows slowly creep, And rising sun at early morn Deck with jewels her waving corn.

Stalwart her men, her women fair, In war, in peace, she does her share; When state and nation on her call She stands as firm as China's wall.

VERSES

By
FRANK H. CRAIG